

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS, JUN.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 152. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1871.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN  
PORT," &c. &c.

### BOOK II.

#### CHAPTER VI. THE WOMAN OF THE WORLD.

A COUNTRY cousin taken by his metropolitan host down Biffen-street, Park-lane, and told that the houses in that narrow and somewhat dingy locality were among the most tempting lots offered by fashionable house-agents to moneyed commerce desiring to establish itself in the regions of fashion, would surely be very much surprised. True that there is about them that surrounding of mews and small public-house seemingly inseparable from desirable residences. True that they are situate in the heart of that exclusive quarter, which is, as it were, the Faubourg St. Germain of London, concentrating within its limits the old families, and looking down with contempt upon Belgravia and Tyburnia. True that the drainage is imperfect, and that the rates are enormous. Granting all these advantages, the country cousin might yet be excused for wondering at there being anything like a struggle for the possession of a residence in Biffen-street.

For what he would see would be short rows of high-shouldered, tall houses, separated by a narrow, ill-paved street, with—running across it at right angles—another street, in which are horse-dealers' yards, and small chandlers' shops, and struggling dairies, and other attempts at domestic commerce on a very small scale. The doors of the houses in Biffen-street are so tiny, that one wonders how the enormous giants in plush, who, on fine summer evenings, are to be seen sunning themselves at the portals, manage to squeeze through them;

the windows looking upon the street are old-fashioned and airless, with small panes frequently not too clean, and sashes from which the paint is worn away; the areas are deep and narrow black tanks, and the houses, so far as outward appearance is concerned, are certainly not more desirable than those to be found in the lodging-letting purlieus of Russell-square.

But once inside, our supposed country cousin would find everything changed, and would speedily be able to understand why Biffen-street commands such high rents, and is so eagerly competed for. For on the west side, at least, the façade to the street is merely a brick delusion or a stucco snare, the fronts of the houses being, Hibernically speaking, at the back; the narrow-paned windows are either dummies, or might be, for all the use that is made of them, enshrouded as they are in bowers of luxurious creeping plants, or hidden away behind ferneries and aquaria; the rooms in the houses are not numerous, but nearly all are large, lofty, and well-proportioned, with great bay windows, which, chiefest charm of all, overlook the broad expanse of Hyde Park.

In a large room on the first floor of one of the best of these houses, on a sofa of peculiar make, with stuffed handles at either end, and small covered wheels in place of the ordinary castors, a woman lay with her face turned towards the window, and her head thrown back to catch as much as possible of the soft evening air. The lower half of the walls was fitted with book-shelves, the upper half hung with a few rare prints and engravings; the mantel-piece was above the height of an ordinary man's stature, the fireplace was tiled, and the space which in winter was occupied by the "dogs," was filled in with looking-

glass, in front of which were pots of rare flowers. The furniture, which was massive and antique, was in black oak and dark blue velvet; the thick carpet was of a sombre Persian pattern, and the whole room had the appearance of a studious man's library. But it was a woman of the world's boudoir, and its owner lay on the sofa at the window.

A tall woman, of some three-and-fifty years of age, of whom the young men of the day are accustomed to say that "she must once have been good-looking." If clear cut features, soft dark hair and eyes, and shapely figure constitute beauty, she is more than good-looking still. Her complexion is very pale, and constant suffering has left a half-worn, half-irritable expression visible in tell-tale lines round her mouth and brow; but her eyes are full of fire, and no physiognomist would fail to mark the firmness and determination evinced in the tight-closing of her lips, as she wrestles and battles with the sharp spasms of pain, which from time to time assail her. Unmistakably well-born and well-nurtured; dressed in a long flowing black cashmere robe, which, hanging in folds over her feet, is confined by a girdle round her waist; with a line of soft white muslin round the throat, and with a piece of handsome black lace brought down in a point, after the fashion of a modern widow's cap, on to her forehead, and falling gracefully over her shoulders.

Twilight has deepened into darkness, the rumble of a few carriages driving to entertainments in the now fast decaying season, is only occasional, and the hum of the people, who wearied out by their day's labour, or of the children who, cooped up in courts and alleys, have come to sit and play about on the greensward, to try and get some notion, however faint, of what the country may be like, has died away; but the occupant of the sofa still lies at the window, gazing out wearily and listlessly over the broad expanse before her. A shaded reading-lamp stands on a small table by her side, and a book with a library ticket pasted on it has fallen to the floor from the hand which hangs in weariness on the back of the sofa; but since that access of pain which caused her to drop it, she has made no attempt to move, and there she lies still, and mute, and uncomplaining.

Through the darkness glides a small, neat, womanly figure, until it reaches the sofa side, where it stops. There has been no sound of footfall, no rustling of dress,

but the lady seems aware of the presence, for she turns her head quietly and says in a full, rich voice, "You there, Willis?"

"Yes, madam, I came to tell you it had struck eleven."

"A work of supererogation, and as such to be avoided! The neighbouring churches are of use to me in one way at all events; I learn the flight of time from their clocks, if not from their preachers. What then?"

"Are you not ready for the morphia and for bed?" said the girl. "Are you not tired, madam?"

"Tired!" echoed the invalid. "Good Heaven! if you only knew how tired I am of everything, and yet how unwilling to give it up! Yes, Willis, I am tired, but I don't intend going to bed just yet."

"Doctor Asprey begged me to see that you were not up later than eleven."

"When you are Doctor Asprey's lady's-maid, you will attend to what he says; while you remain with me, you will obey me alone. I shall not leave this room until Mr. Gerald returns."

The girl had been too long in her mistress's service to attempt to argue with her, so she merely bowed, and was about to retire when the lady stopped her by a gesture.

"Stay," she said, "do not leave me, Willis; I have been alone now for a couple of hours, and there is no society I get so soon sick of as my own. That was a bad attack I had just now."

"It was, indeed, madam," said the girl, earnestly, "a very bad one."

"You thought I was dying, Willis?" said the lady, looking fixedly at her, with a smile upon her lips.

"I confess that I was very frightened," said Willis.

"As frightened as you were three years ago when we were in Greece?"

"Do you mean, madam, when we were at Mite—Mite——"

"At Mitylene."

"Yes! You looked so exactly the same, madam, this evening, as you did then."

"I felt exactly the same, Willis; that curious languor, that sense of my hold on life gradually, but surely, relaxing; that impossibility to fight against the icy numbness stealing over me; all those sensations I had at Mitylene. I had almost forgotten them until they were renewed to-night. Now tell me, what did Doctor Asprey say to you on the stairs?"

"He said——" and the girl's voice hesitated, and her cheeks flushed as she spoke,

"he said that—that you had been very ill, madam; but that you were better."

"That was oracular, indeed," said the invalid, smiling. "Did you come into my service yesterday, Willis? or do you take me for a fool, that you think to put me off with such nonsense? Tell me plainly, what did the doctor say?"

The girl hesitated again, but the invalid's eyes were fixed upon her, and she proceeded. "Doctor Asprey said, madam, that he had only arrived just in time to—to 'pull you through,' were his words, and that if you had another attack he—

you—"

"I should die in it, I suppose," said the invalid, quietly.

"He would not answer for the consequences, was what the doctor said."

"It is pretty much the same thing! And you were frightened to tell me this? Have you not seen me for years looking death in the face, as it were, and do you think that the hint of its nearer approach could have any effect upon me? I told you, when you first came to me, that there was a chance of my dying at any moment, and that you would probably have to get your character for your next place from my executors, and now— Did I not hear the street-door shut? Mr. Gerald is returned, he will come straight to this room. There are tears in your eyes, Willis; dry them at once, and get away before he comes; you know how quick and observant he is."

Obedying this order, Willis hurried from the room. She had scarcely done so, when Gerald Hardinge, entering, walked straight to the sofa and seated himself in a low chair beside it, taking one of its occupant's hands between his.

Rose Pierrepont was right in saying that Gerald's personal appearance had greatly improved since the old days. His face had a colour in it, which it lacked then, and his strong active figure was set off by well-cut clothes. His voice, always soft and refined, sounded singularly sweet, as bending over the figure on the sofa, and lightly kissing its forehead, he said, "Why do I find you up so late, to-night; is not this dissipation against all orders?"

"This dissipation, as you call it, has occurred wholly and solely on your account. I sat up to see you."

"It is all very well to say that," said Gerald, laughing, "but you were always addicted to frivolity, and you have been amusing yourself, I know, with watching the people in the Park."

"My dear Gerald, even the philanderings of tall guardsmen with short plain cooks, and the pastimes of dirty children, have ceased to inspire me with much interest. That was all to be seen while daylight remained, and it has been dark for the last two hours."

"And yet you have remained here—I was going to say reading, but the position of the book," pointing to it, "is scarcely complimentary to the author."

"The book," said the invalid, glancing at the fallen volume, "is the usual accurate description of fashionable life from the scullery-maid's point of view. No, I have been amusing myself in thinking."

"Thinking of what?"

"Many things and persons, you among the number; but I will not inflict upon you an inventory of my thoughts, at all events just now. You dined with Doctor Asprey. Had you a pleasant party? Who were there?"

"Only two other men, neither of whom I think you know, a Mr. Delabole and a Mr. Vane."

"I have met Mr. Delabole, a coarse, common vulgarian, pushing and presuming; just the style of person one expects to find at Madame Uffizzi's, where I met him, and who is invited by her on account of business relations with her husband. Who is the other man, one of the Northumberland Vanes?"

"I should think not," said Gerald, laughing; "a pleasing, rattling, agreeable kind of fellow, who talked very well. He had to do a goodish deal of talking, by the way, for the doctor was sent for early in the dinner, and was away for an hour."

"What was his summons?"

"To a patient of course, and an urgent case I fancy, for he rose from the table directly his most mysterious butler whispered in his ear. I need not tell you that he did not mention the name or the case."

"Doctor Asprey is a model of discretion," said the invalid, with a faint smile; then leaning a little towards her companion, and laying her hand on his, she added, "Would it surprise you, my dear Gerald, to hear that it was to see me that Doctor Asprey left his friends?"

"You!" echoed the young man.

"Me. After you left the house, I had warning of a bad attack, and when its imminence became certain, I thought it better that the doctor should be here to stave it off, if possible."

"And you hadn't a thought to send for

me at such a time," said the young man, bending tenderly over her, but speaking in tones of reproach.

"What good could it have done?" she asked. "I knew you were enjoying yourself, and life is too short to let slip any such opportunity. You could have done me no good, and the sight of you, and the thought that I was leaving you, would not have rendered death more pleasant to me."

"You must not speak like that," said Gerald, gently.

"And why not?" said the invalid, with a smile; "the fact will not be averted or postponed by our ignoring it, and I have a strong conviction that my hold on life, which of late years has been sufficiently feeble, is gradually relaxing altogether."

"What makes you think that?" he said, in a low, tremulous voice.

"I do not think it," she replied; "I know it. Five or six years ago I went for a tour in the East alone, that is to say, with Willis for my sole companion; while in Constantinople I had a severe attack of rheumatism, and was recommended by a French physician, who attended me, to try the baths of Vassilica, in the island of Mitylene, which, at one time, were famous for their cure of such disorders. I went to Mitylene, and found it paradise; and when you have no longer this old woman to tie you to this detestable place, you must go there, Gerald, and recompense yourself for having given up a portion of your youth to her love of your companionship."

"If it pleases you to speak in this way, of course it is not for me to check you," said the young man, shrugging his shoulders.

"There," said the invalid, "I will say no more on that head since it displeases you, but will continue my story. The baths did me good, and the climate rendered me quite another being; it seemed to me that, for the first time, I knew what life was, as distinguished from existence. I forgot that perpetual gnawing pain which had never left me for so many years, and I began to think it not impossible that in time I should have some toleration for my fellow-creatures. Willis thought the Golden Age had arrived, and I had some idea of taking up my quarters there for good, and establishing myself as a kind of civilised Lady Hester Stanhope among the Greek rayahs, when something happened which changed all my intentions. Close to Mitylene is a place called Lovochari, or the Village of the Lepers, a ter-

rible place, where the people so afflicted are herded together. I had been warned not to go, but I persisted, and dearly I paid for my obstinacy. The sight was terrific, and once seen, was impossible to be got rid of. All day, after my return, I tried to shut it from my mental vision, but there it remained, and at night the hideous objects which I had seen rose before me more terrible than ever; I suppose the fatigue and the horror under which I laboured had something to do with it, but that night I experienced a new phase in my illness. During Willis's temporary absence from the room I fell into a comatose state, a kind of trance, in the commencement of which I felt my life, as it were, gradually slipping away from me; I seemed to be growing weaker and weaker, pulseless, dead; for I was dead, so far as power of motion, thought, or feeling was concerned. I need not tell you how I was brought round, or bore you with the details of my recovery, which was as sudden as had been the attack. I need only say, my dear Gerald, that this evening I have gone through an exactly similar phase of my illness, and that I know that Doctor Asprey thinks that the wolf, whose approach has been so often announced, is about to come down upon me at last."

Overcome by emotion, the young man sat silent, only pressing the hand which he held between his own.

"Do not think that I am going to be sentimental, my dear Gerald," continued the invalid, "or that I intend saying to you any 'last words,' or any nonsense of that kind. Notwithstanding all my ailments, I have amused myself sufficiently in life, and I am human enough to care sufficiently about such low creature comforts as good eating and drinking, warmth and luxury, not to be overjoyed at the prospects of having speedily to give them up; as for parting from you, I never intend to hint at the subject. I hope that one evening we shall say good-night as usual—there, now, I am drifting into the very sentimental nonsense that I wish to avoid. What I have to say and must say is purely practical. It will be no surprise to you to hear that I have left you all I have in the world."

His head was averted, and for an instant he made no response; when he turned round his cheeks were burning.

"It seems horrible to talk to you in this cold-blooded way," said he, "after all your goodness to me, and at such a moment, but you have given me an opportunity which



I have long wanted, and which I must not miss. What I want to say is, to say in all gentleness and affection, that I cannot accept any further kindness at your hands; that I cannot take this legacy from you to the exclusion of others who have doubtless claims of blood upon you."

The invalid smiled faintly as she said: "Persons with claims of blood I suppose are relations. Providence has kindly spared me any such annoyances! And I think you will allow, before we part to-night, that I have not been acting, nor am I going to act, like a stupid old woman, as the world most probably believes, but that, at all events, there has been method in my madness. Now, Gerald, take this key and open the middle drawer in that cabinet; close to the front you will find a small soft paper parcel—bring it to me."

The young man obeyed. The invalid was about to open the paper, but she refrained.

"Open it yourself," she said.

Gerald took off the outer wrappings of paper, and came upon a miniature painted on ivory, in the style so much in vogue half a century ago.

"Look at it well, and tell me if you know for whom it is intended."

Gerald took the portrait to the lamp and examined it carefully. It represented a young man of about five-and-twenty years of age, with whiskerless cheeks, and clear blue eyes, and fair hair, curling in a thick crisp mass on his head. He had on a scarlet uniform coat and white duck trousers, and his hand rested on the hilt of a sword.

Glancing at this portrait, Gerald started; bending down to observe it more closely, the colour left his cheeks, and his hand trembled.

"You know the original?" asked the invalid.

"I have seen him," faltered Gerald. "It is, I presume, intended for Sir Geoffrey Heriot."

"Exactly," said the invalid. "For your father, George!"

"You know me!" cried Gerald, placing the portrait on a table, and returning to his position by the sofa.

"Certainly, Gerald! I must call you Gerald, I could never get used to George. Certainly, I know you, Gerald!"

"Since when have you known my real name and my position, or rather," he added, bitterly, "what ought to have been my position?"

"Before I ever set eyes upon you," said

the invalid; "before I purchased those two pictures," pointing to two sketches in oil, resting on one of the cabinets, "which were not great triumphs of art, as you will allow, my dear Gerald, but which it suited me then to pay well for."

"And all this time that I have been living on your bounty, as it were, you knew that I was an impostor; that the name under which I passed was not my own; the story which I told you of my previous life was a fiction."

"You use harsh language in speaking of yourself, Gerald," said the invalid. "If you had not been who you are, I should have taken no interest in you or your fortune. You cannot suppose, for you are not a vain boy, that a sensible old woman like myself was idiotic enough to have fallen in love with you, and to take an interest in you for your beaux yeux. You cannot imagine that, true worldling as I am, I was actuated by philanthropy, or any preposterous motive of that kind, to adopt a young person whom I had never seen, to make him my companion and my heir. No, when I saw you, I liked your appearance and manner; when I came to know you, I learned to love you as my own child; but what induced me in the first instance to send for you—and when I sent for you it was with the determination to hold to you, if you had been as bad as you are good, to give you position, if you had been as totally unfitted as you are totally fitted for it—was the knowledge that you were Geoffrey Heriot's discarded son, and that all good fortune accruing to you would be, when he knows it—as he will! as he shall! sooner or later!—be gall and wormwood to Geoffrey Heriot!"

Gerald had sat open-eyed, regarding with wonder the fire which blazed in her eyes, and the expression of hatred and contempt which swept across her face at each mention of his father's name.

"You speak very harshly of Sir Geoffrey Heriot," he said, after a pause.

"I speak harshly because I hate him, but I hate him because I have cause."

"He must have known you well to have had the opportunity of raising such resentment in you?"

"I knew him too well; he embittered the whole current of my life; he—there is no need for any further mysteries, Gerald," she said, with an effort to calm herself. "I was always waiting for some chance of your hearing my maiden name mentioned in the world, when you would have at once

understood the source of my interest in you; but it is so long since I was a girl, and so long since I have been known as Mrs. Entwistle, that people seemed to forget I was once Florence Hastings!"

"Hastings! that was my mother's name," said Gerald, quickly, with a beating heart. "Was she related to you?"

"She was my sister," said Mrs. Entwistle, quietly.

### REAL HORSES.

A HORSE in the highway is simply a horse and nothing more; but, transferred to the theatre, the noble animal becomes a *real* horse. The distinction is necessary in order that there may be no confusing the works of nature with the achievements of the property-maker. Not that this indispensable dramatic artist shrinks from competition. But he would not have ascribed to him the production of another manufactory, so to say. His business is in counterfeits; he views with some disdain a genuine article. When the famous elephant Chunee stepped upon the stage of Covent Garden, the chief performer in the pantomime of Harlequin and Padmanaba, or the Golden Fish, the creature was but scornfully regarded by Mr. Johnson, the property-man of Drury Lane. "I should be very sorry," he cried, "if I could not make a better elephant than that!" And it would seem that he afterwards justified his pretensions, especially in the eyes of the play-goers prizing imitative skill above mere reality. We read in the parody of Coleridge, in *Rejected Addresses*:

Amid the freaks that modern fashion sanctions,  
It grieves me much to see live animals  
Brought on the stage. Grimaldi has his rabbit,  
Laurent his cat, and Bradbury his pig;  
Fie on such tricks! Johnson, the machinist,  
Of former Drury, imitated life  
Quite to the life! The elephant in Blue Beard,  
Stuffed by his hand, wound round his lithe proboscis  
As spruce as he who roared in Padmanaba.

But no doubt an artificial elephant is more easily to be fabricated than an artificial horse. We do not encounter real elephants at every turn with which to compare the counterfeit. The animal is of bulky proportions, and somewhat ungainly movements. With a frame of wicker-work, and a hide of painted canvas, the creature can be fairly represented. But a horse is a different matter. Horses abound, however, and have proved themselves, time out of mind, apt pupils. They can readily be trained and taught to perform all kinds

of feats and antics. So the skill of the property-maker is not taxed. He stands on one side, and permits the real horse to enter upon the mimic scene.

When Don Adriano de Armado, the fantastical Spaniard of Love's Labour Lost, admits that he is "ill at reckoning," and cannot tell "how many is one thrice told," his page Moth observes "how easy it is to put years to the word three, and study three years in two words, the dancing horse will tell you." This is without doubt an allusion to a horse called Marocco, trained by its master, one Banks, a Scotchman, to perform various strange tricks. Marocco, a young bay nag of moderate size, was exhibited in Shakespeare's time in the court-yard of the Belle Sauvage Inn, on Ludgate-hill, the spectators lining the galleries of the hostelry. A pamphlet, published in 1595, and entitled *Maroccus Exstaticus, or Bankes Bay Horse in a Trance; a Discourse set down in a Merry Dialogue between Bankes and his Beast*, contains a wood-print of the performing animal and his proprietor. Banks's horse must have been one of the earliest "trained steeds" ever exhibited. His tricks excited great amazement, although they would hardly now be accounted very wonderful. Marocco could walk on his hind legs, and even dance the Canaries. At the bidding of his master he would carry a glove to a specified lady or gentleman, and tell, by raps with his hoof, the numbers on the upper face of a pair of dice. He went through, indeed, much of what is now the regular "business" of the circus horse. In 1600, Banks amazed London by taking his horse up to the vane on the top of St. Paul's Cathedral. Marocco visited Scotland and France, and in these countries his accomplishments were generally attributable to witchcraft. Banks rashly encouraged the notion that his nag was supernaturally endowed. An alarm was raised that Marocco was possessed by the Evil One. To relieve misgivings and escape reproach, Banks made his horse pay homage to the sign of the cross, and called upon all to observe that nothing satanic could have been induced to perform this act of reverence. A rumour at one time prevailed that the horse and his master had both, as "subjects of the Black Power of the world," been burned at Rome by order of the Pope. More authentic accounts, however, show Banks as surviving to Charles the First's time, and thriving as a vintner in Cheap-side. But it is to be gathered from Douce's

Illustrations of Shakespeare, that of old certain performing horses suffered miserably for their skill. In a little book, *Le Diable Bossu*, Nancy, 1708, allusion is made to an English horse, whose master had taught him to know the cards, being burnt alive at Lisbon, in 1707; and Grainger, in his *Biographical History of England*, 1779, states that, within his remembrance, "a horse, which had been taught to perform several tricks, was, with its owner, put into the Inquisition."

Marocco was but a circus horse; there is no evidence to show that he ever trod the stage, or took part in theatrical performances. It is hard to say, indeed, when horses first entered a regular theatre. Pepys chronicles, in 1668, a visit "to the King's Playhouse, to see an old play of Shirley's, called *Hide Park*, the first day acted [revived], where horses are brought upon the stage." He expresses no surprise at the introduction of the animals, and this may not have been their first appearance on the scene. He is content to note that *Hide Park* is "a very moderate play, only an excellent epilogue spoken by Beck Marshall." The scene of the third and fourth acts of the comedy lies in the park, and foot and horse races are represented. The horses probably were only required to cross the stage once or twice.

A representation of Corneille's tragedy of *Andromeda*, in 1682, occasioned great excitement in Paris, owing to the introduction of a "real horse" to play the part of Pegasus. The horse was generally regarded as a kind of Roscius of the brute creation, and achieved an extraordinary success. Adorned with wings and hoisted up by machinery, he neighed and tossed his head, pawed and pranced in mid-air after a very lively manner. It was a mystery then, but it is common enough knowledge now, that the horse's histrionic skill is founded upon his appetite. Kept without food for some time the horse becomes naturally moved at the sight of a sieve of corn in the side-wings. His feats, the picking up of gloves and handkerchiefs, even the pulling of triggers, originate but in his efforts to find oats. By-and-bye his memory is exercised, and he is content to know that after the conclusion of his "business," he will be rewarded with oats behind the scenes. The postponement of his meals attends his failure to accomplish what is required of him. Of old, perhaps, some cruel use of whip and spur may have marked the education of the "trick-horse."

But for a long time past the animal's fears have not been appealed to, but simply his love of food. Horses are very sagacious, and their natural timidity once appeased, they become exceedingly docile. An untrained horse has often shown himself equal to the ordinary requirements of the equestrian manager after only four days of tuition.

Pope satirised the introduction of horses in Shakespeare's *Henry the Eighth*, revived with great splendour in 1727, when a representation was given of the coronation of Anne Bullen, and the royal champion, duly mounted and caparisoned, proclaimed his challenge. But for many years the appearances on the stage of equine performers were only of an occasional kind. It was not until the rebuilding of Astley's in 1803, that the equestrian drama became an established entertainment. An extensive stage was then added to the circus, and "horse spectacles," as they were called, were first presented. A grand drama called the *Blood-Red Knight*, produced in 1810, resulted in a profit to the proprietors of some eighteen thousand pounds, a handsome sum, seeing that the season at that time only extended from Easter to the end of September.

The triumphs of Astley's excited the envy of the Covent Garden managers. Colman's drama of *Blue Beard* was reproduced, with Mr. Johnson's imitation elephant, and a troop of real horses. The performance was presented on forty-four nights, a long run in those days. There was, of course, much wrath excited by this degradation of the stage. A contemporary critic writes: "A novel and marked event occurred at this theatre on this evening (18th of February, 1811), which should be considered as a black epocha for ever by the loyal adherents to wit and the muses. As the Mussulmen date their computation of years from the flight of Mahomet, so should the hordes of folly commence their triumphant register from the open flight of common sense on this memorable night, when a whole troop of horses made their first appearance in character at Covent Garden." The manager was fiercely denounced for his unscrupulous endeavours "to obtain money at the expense of his official dignity." Another critic, alleging that "the dressing-rooms of the new company of comedians were under the orchestra," complained that "in the first row of the pit the stench was so abominable, one might as well have sitten in a stable." Still the "equestrian

drama" delighted the town. Blue Beard was followed by Monk Lewis's Timour the Tartar, in which more horses appeared. Some hissing was heard at the commencement of the new drama, and placards were exhibited in the pit condemning the horses; but in the end Timour triumphed over all opposition, and rivalled the run of Blue Beard. It is to be remembered, especially by those who insist so much on the degeneracy of the modern theatre, that these "horse spectacles" were presented in a patent-house during the palmy days of the drama, while the great Kemble family was still in possession of the stage of Covent Garden.

These equestrian doings were satirised at the Haymarket Theatre in the following summer. The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh, or the Rovers of Weimar, was produced, being an adaptation by Colman of a burlesque, attributed to Canning, in the Anti-Jacobin. It was designed to ridicule not merely the introduction of horses upon the stage, but also the then prevailing taste for morbid German dramas of the Kotzebue school. The prologue was in part a travestie of Pope's prologue to Cato, and contained references to the plays of Lovers' Vows and the Stranger.

To lull the soul by spurious strokes of art,  
To warp the genius and mislead the heart,  
To make mankind reverse wives gone astray,  
Love pious sons who rob on the highway,  
For this the foreign muses trod our stage,  
Commanding German schools to be the rage.

Dear JOHNNY BULL, you boast much resolution,  
With, thanks to Heaven, a glorious constitution;  
Your taste, recovered half from foreign quacks,  
Takes airings now on English horses' backs,  
While every modern bard may raise his name,  
If not on lasting praise, on stable fame.  
Think that to Germans you have given no check,  
Think how each actor horsed has risked his neck;  
You've shown them favour. Oh, then, once more  
show it

To this night's Anglo-German horse-play poet.

In the course of the play the sentimental sentinel in Pizarro was ridiculed, and the whole concluded with a grand battle, in which the last scene of Timour the Tartar was imitated and burlesqued. "Stuffed ponies and donkeys frisked about with ludicrous agility," writes a critic of the time. The play was thoroughly successful, and would seem to have retrieved the fortunes of the theatre, which had been long in a disastrous condition.

Drury Lane also struck a blow at the "horse spectacles" of the rival house. In 1812 was produced Quadrupeds, or the Manager's Last Kick. This was only a revised version of the old burlesque of the

Tailors, a Tragedy for Warm Weather, usually ascribed to Foote. In the last scene an army of tailors appeared, mounted on asses and mules, and much fun of a pantomimic kind ensued. Some years later, however, Drury Lane was content to derive profit from a drama in which "real horses" appeared, with the additional attraction of "real water." This was Moncrieff's play of the Cataract of the Ganges. Indeed, Drury Lane was but little entitled to vaunt its superiority in the matter. In 1803 its treasury had greatly benefited from the feats of the "real dog" in Reynolds's melodrama the Caravan. "Real water," indeed, had been brought upon the stage by Garrick himself, who owed his prosperity, not more to his genius as an actor than to his ingenuity as a purveyor of pantomimes and spectacles. One of his addresses to his audience contains the lines:

What eager transport stares from every eye,  
When pulleys rattle, and our genii fly,  
When tin cascades like falling waters gleam,  
Or through the canvas bursts the real stream,  
While thirsty Islington laments in vain  
Half her New River rolled to Drury Lane.

Of late years a change has come over the equestrian drama. The circus flourishes, and quadrupeds figure now and then upon the stage, but the "horse spectacle" has almost vanished. The noble animal is to be seen occasionally on the boards, but he is cast for small parts only, is little better than a four-footed supernumerary. He comes on to aid the pageantry of the scenes; even opera does not disdain his services in this respect. A richly caparisoned charger performs certain simple duties in Masaniello, in Les Huguenots, L'Etoile du Nord, Martha, La Juive, and some few other operas. The late M. Jullien introduced quite a troop of cavalry in his Pietro il Grande, but this homage to horseflesh notwithstanding, the world did not greatly prize the work in question. The horse no longer performs "leading business." Plays are not now written for him. He is no longer required to evince the fidelity and devotion of his nature by knocking at street-doors, rescuing a prisoned master, defending oppressed innocence, or dying in the centre of the stage to slow music. Something of a part seemed promised him when the popular drama of Flying Scud was first represented; at least, he supplied that work with its title. But it was speedily to be perceived that animal interests had been subordinated to human. More prominent occupation by far was assigned to the rider



than to the horse. A different plan of distributing parts prevailed when the High-Mettled Racer and kindred works adorned the stage. A horse with histrionic instincts and acquirements had something like a chance then. But now! he can only lament the decline of the equestrian drama. True, the circus is still open to him; but in the eyes of a well-educated performing horse a circus must be much what a music-hall is, in the opinion of a tragedian devoted to five-act plays.

### THE CONSTANT COUPLE.

BLESS them! I say, fervently, sincerely, and emphatically. Constancy is not so very common a virtue that we can afford to let it go by, unrecognised, when we find it in our path; but I can scarcely traverse two steps without being reminded of the existence of the Constant Couple. Therefore, I would repeat, bless them. May their shadows—and their persons cast very lengthy shadows indeed—never be less. May they flourish “root and branch,” as the festive formula runs at City companies’ dinners. No oak ever struck deeper root than the Constant Couple have done; and as for their branches, they have spread more widely than those of a banyan tree. May they increase and multiply; and their name is Legion, already. Here is their health! The Constant Couple: with all the honours. The Constant Couple, with three times three!

Ay; they may well be toasted in triplets, for my personal acquaintance with the Couple goes back at least three hundred years. Deem it not that I am romancing, or that I wish to set up as Rip Van Winkle, Old Parr, or one of the Seven Sleepers. I can barely remember His Majesty George the Fourth. Bearing the consequences of my assertion fully in mind, I am about to make a statement even more astounding. It was in about the middle of the sixteenth century that I became familiar with my Couple as inseparably Constant; but I may say that I was aware of them two thousand years ago, albeit under slightly less indissoluble conditions. They were courting then, perhaps. She had not quite made up her mind, as to whether a more eligible partner might not be existent somewhere. He was not quite certain as to whether it was quite prudent to incur all the responsibilities of matrimony upon an income of seventy thousand a year. Don’t start at

the mention of such a sum. It is obvious that the Constant Couple are immensely wealthy. They are always dressed in the extreme of the fashion, and have been thus dressed, mind you, since the commencement of the Christian era; nay, in heathen times, as I shall presently show, they were accustomed to wear the most expensive togas and the most elegant stoles. They have always had horses and carriages when they chose; although, for their health’s sake, doubtless, they usually prefer to walk. They go into the very best society; and I know for a fact that they enjoy the entrée at St. James’s; that they are of every court ball and garden party; that they are always invited to the private view of the Royal Academy—he only attends the Academy dinner, and I can see him now, waving his napkin in a frenzy of enthusiasm, when Sir Francis Grant proposes the health of the Archbishop of Canterbury; and that they were present at the laying of the first stone of St. Thomas’s Hospital, the opening of the Isthmus of Suez Canal, the inauguration of the Holborn Viaduct, and the marriage of the Princess Louise. Do I err, then, looking at the splendour of their attire, the grandeur of their connexions, and the perpetuity of their locomotion, in assuming in their case the possession of vast riches?

As I have said, it was not until the time of the Renaissance, and especially until the period of the dissemination of wood engravings by means of the printing-press, that the Constant Couple came together, and commenced their affectionate practice of walking about the world arm-in-arm, seeing all that is to be seen, and taking apparently the liveliest interest therein. Long before the time of Holbein and Albert Durer, however, the Couple were to be found in old block-books, illuminated manuscripts, encaustic wall-paintings, carved bench-ends in cathedrals, and even in the bas-reliefs of ancient sarcophagi. If you will look at the oldest water-colour drawing in the world, and the finest, perhaps, ever executed—that beautiful distemper sketch preserved in the Vatican, and called the Nozze Aldobrandini—you will find the Couple, togaed, stoled, peplumed, filleted, and sandalled, side by side, gazing pensively at the newly-married pair. Close by them is an elegant altar, from which curls a slender skein of the blue smoke of incense. Surely in this charming performance, the fore-runner of ever so many thousands of Corboulds, and Haghes, and Carl Werners, there

must have been likewise latent the idea of the first valentine. Straightway, I fancy, did the Couple in the Nozze catch at the glorious notion. "No more," they cried, "will we be apart." They sang the duet in Norma, "Yes, we together will live and die." Forthwith he slipped off his toga and assumed a blue coat with brass buttons, a canary waistcoat, and fawn-coloured pantaloons. With equal promptitude she dismantled herself of her stola and peplum, and donned a pink muslin dress, a black satin jacket, a hat and feathers, and a very large blue parasol. There was nothing else needed after this but for them to be enshrined in a frame of artificial flowers, or cut paper imitative of lace, and to walk up a serpentine gravel-path in the midst of a meadow of the brightest emerald green, and to be arm-in-arm, and constant, for ever and ever.

But the valentine phase of the Constant Couple is their cheapest and their vulgarest one. They derogate from their station every February; and I am ashamed to confess, that at this season he often takes the guise of a journeyman butcher, and she of a milliner's apprentice. Nay, I have seen the Constant Couple brought down so low as to be sold for a penny; he daubed in the most staring colours, and with great red blotches on his cheeks and nose, and smoking a cheap cheroot; she holding up her dress to display an inordinate crinoline, and a preposterously high-heeled boot, and with a label issuing from her lips, expressive of the rudest things. It is only once a year fortunately that this sad exhibition takes place. The 14th of February once past, the Constant Couple revert to their normal status as the cream of the cream of aristocracy and refinement.

Let me travel back to the Middle Ages—the birth of printing and the development of wood engraving. The Constant Couple—the gentleman in a slashed doublet, monstrously bombasted trunks, shoes with huge rosettes, and a prodigious basket rapier; the lady in a quilted farthingale, and a ruff as big as a cart-wheel—are very great in the Nuremberg Chronicle, that quaint prototype of our Illustrated London News and Graphic. They may be seen beholding the triumphs of Maximilian and the crowning of the kaiser at Frankfort; taking no personal part, it is true, in holding out the platters for portions of the ox roasted whole, or goblets for the wine with which the great fountain runs; disdaining—as befits their quality—to scramble for the largesse flung by the

heralds, or for fragments of the scarlet cloth on which the emperor walks, but still contemplating all these ceremonies with the liveliest complacency. I am sorry to say that in mediæval times their amusements were not always of this cheerful description. They were addicted, I fear, to sight-seeing of the sensational and ghastly kind; and in that grimmest of grim books, the Praxis Criminis Persequendi of Millæus, I light on the Constant Couple "assisting," as the French say, with an expression of the most intense interest at the question extraordinary by the strappado, at the breaking on the wheel of a highwayman, at the baking and boiling of sundry coiners, heretics, and Jews, and at the scourging of a wretched adventuress, who receives her punishment on a donkey's back, with her face turned towards the animal's tail. Strange that a Couple moving (arm-in-arm) in the first circles, accustomed to the very acmé of sweetness and light, creatures of the highest culture, and who never miss such truly elegant spectacles as the enthronisation of the Bishop of Winchester, or the presentation of purses to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Teck on the completion of a new wing to the Home for Little Boys, should give way to such morbid, to such degrading impulses. Yet so it is; and their addictedness to horrible spectacles has endured, I fear, to this day. I never yet saw a picture of Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors; yet, in all likelihood, were such a representation produced, the Couple would be found blandly surveying the obnoxious criminals in wax-work; while he gave her a technical description of the working of the guillotine, and she, with the eye of a connoisseur, examined the texture of Maria Manning's Paisley shawl. On the other hand, the Constant Couple, watching the late Duke of Wellington as he gazed on the model of Napoleon lying on the identical camp-bed on which he died at St. Helena, is patent to all mankind. The Constant Couple were passionately fond of the Great Duke. When (with the assistance of Sir Edwin Landseer) the hero revisited the field of Waterloo in the company of the Marchioness of Douro, the couple, disguised as a Flemish boor in a blouse and a young vrouw in a tall cap, lay on the turf at Mont St. Jean, and importuned the illustrious visitors to purchase a guide-book, and a quantity of sham relics. Of course they were present at the lying in state at Chelsea Hospital. She had her bonnet crushed, and lost one of her shoes in the

pressure of the crowd; he emerged from it with his costly attire as tattered and torn as that of the man in the House that Jack Built. I don't think I ever saw them in so pitiable a condition since the day when they waited from nine A.M. to six-thirty P.M. at the pit-door of Drury Lane Theatre, in the hope of securing front places to witness the performance of Master Betty. Their admiration for the Young Roscius cost them nearly all their clothes; but they were superior to misfortune, and appeared in brand-new suits on the bridge across the ornamental water in St. James's Park, on the occasion of the visit to this country of the Allied Sovereigns. He had his coat singed by one of Sir William Congreve's squibs discharged from the Temple of Concord, and her hat, with a prodigious top-knot of feathers, was in considerable danger from a stray rocket-stick; but they were bound to confront crowds and to surmount difficulties. They were in the smartest of wherries, and close alongside of the royal barge, when William the Fourth went in state to the opening of New London Bridge (I grieve to say that ten years previously they had caught sad colds, and ran a narrow risk of being sabred into the bargain by the Life Guards Blue, when mingling in the mob at Queen Caroline's funeral); but they were all themselves again at the coronation of Queen Victoria. "Themselves!" I should think so; the Constant Couple then came out in their proper colours. Their rank and state became revealed. He in the robes of a baron, and holding his coronet in his hand, and she with a lofty plume of ostrich feathers, and all Golconda in diamonds on her lovely person, stood arm-in-arm in Westminster Hall to see the sovereign pass. I saw them again under similar happy auspices no later than last spring, beneath the portico of the House of Lords. It was the day when parliament was opened by Her Majesty; and, the ceremonial being over, the Constant Couple were waiting for their carriage to come up.

But mark the modesty, the simple-mindedness of true virtue and worth. This manifestly high-born pair are not too proud, on occasion, to assume the garb, and to assimilate themselves to the condition of the middle classes. If the Queen travels to Scotland, the Constant Couple are, by favour of the station-master, admitted to the railway platform, and with loyalty beaming in their countenances, they hail the arrival of the royal train. Then he raises his hat, and she waves her handker-

chief. There never was such a Couple for raising their hat and waving their handkerchief. They are also devotedly fond of flower shows and fancy fairs; they moderately favour meetings of the Social Science Association, and they sometimes patronise a Sunday-school tea-meeting, or temperance gathering. I fancy though that he—as a rule the most docile of partners—is apt to be recalcitrant when Sunday schools or teetotalism are on the tapis. Strictly virtuous and unimpeachably genteel, he is yet, I imagine, somewhat of a jovial soul. But it is at International Exhibitions that the ubiquitous Abelard and Heloise are in their greatest glory. See them in Hyde Park in '51; at South Kensington in '62; in the Champs Elysées in '55; in the Cromwell-road in '62; in the Champs de Mars in '67, and at South Kensington in the present year of grace. They are indefatigable in their attendance; their great curiosity has stomach for all: machinery in motion, crown jewels, surgical preparations, and Mr. Cremer's toys; cashmere shawls, Barbédienne's bronzes, automaton singing birds, international fine art, the flora and fauna of the province of Tobolsk, and the pottery of all nations. In their perambulation of the galleries, I notice with indescribable joy that they have a companion of their wanderings, and a participator in their pleasures. I always thought—I always maintained, that they were a happy as well as a Constant Couple. See, Heaven has blessed their union with offspring! The Couple always take a child with them to the Exhibition; and from the fondly confiding manner—a kind of seraphic smirk—with which the pledge of affection looks up in their eyes, it is easy to see that the couple are his papa and mamma. Sometimes the pledge is a sprightly youth in black velvet knickerbockers, at other times a sylph-like girl in a short skirt and laced pantalettes. Their chief characteristic, apart from devoted filial love, is a continual thirst for information; and the Constant Couple have enough to do in answering a perpetual flow of Mangnall's Questions on art and industry, textile fabrics and ceramic ware.

The Constant Couple never fail to attend the University boat-race, and may be seen crossing over Barnes Common on horseback, he raising his hat, she waving her handkerchief in honour of the victorious, but absent crew. You will be sure, likewise, to meet them at the Oxford Commemoration. Then he wears a college cap and gown, and has evidently graduated high in honours; and she, just for the fun of the thing, pre-

tends to be his mother, or his sister, or his sweetheart. But meet them next week at the Crystal Palace—they never yet missed a Handel Festival, or an operatic Saturday—and they become man and wife again. As man and wife I have lately viewed them inspecting the manufacture of the Glenfield patent starch, and I have no doubt they take an equal interest in the preparation of ozokerit and sea moss farine. I know they do in the Derby and the Cattle Show at the Agricultural Hall, and the launch of the iron-clad turret-ship Fonderer. And, upon my word—that wonderful Couple—there they were last week, all eyes and ears, in the riding-school at Versailles, spectators of the Communist trials. They had previously watched the demon firemen pumping petroleum into the blazing ruins of the Finance Ministry. Pictorial particulars of the opening of the Mont Cenis Tunnel have not come to hand as I close this paper, but when the abstract and brief chronicle (in wood-cuts) appears, I shall be bitterly disappointed if I do not find the Constant Couple awaiting the arrival of the first train through the Alps, and cheering the Commendatore Grattoni to the echo.

But halt—"basta!"—I have pursued my idle whim long enough, and must not worry it to death. The secret—it is but a secret de Polichinelle—is divulged. Go you, as I have done, to a few back volumes of the illustrated papers; go to the chromolithographic show-bills of tradesmen, and the headings of almanacks; go to the frontispieces of old books, the engravings in hand-books to London, and the designs for new public buildings, sent every year by imaginative and hopeful architects to the Royal Academy, and you will know as much about the Constant Couple as I do. Bless them again, I say, for their counterfeit presentiments have made me laugh heartily many a time. And to be able to laugh, as the world wags, is something.

## SERENADE.

Art thou waking,  
Merry sun? Yea, thou art waking;  
On the heights thy smile is breaking,  
While the cold stars fainter glowing  
Fade, and morning winds are blowing  
Warm and free.

Art thou waking,  
Little bird? Yea, thou art waking;  
Songs of morning thou art making,  
In the sunlight thou art leaping.  
Out and in the green boughs creeping  
Merrily.

Art thou waking  
Happy rose-bush? Yea, thy breaking  
Blossoms the sweet light are taking;  
And thy buds are lifted slowly,  
That thy cups with dewdrops holy  
Filled may be.

Art thou waking,  
Pretty maiden? Art thou waking?  
'Neath the window with heart aching,  
I have waited fondly pining  
That thy face's first sweet shining  
I may see!

Thou art waking,  
Dearest, brightest, thou art waking,  
Thy white blind is sweetly breaking  
Like a lily's leaves asunder,  
And thine eyes with a sweet wonder  
Shine on me.

All is waking,  
All is waking,  
Day is breaking!  
Each the new delight partaking,  
Birds are singing, roses blowing,  
And thy lover, yearning, glowing,  
Waits for thee!

## OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

AN OLD RUGBY STORY. THE LITTLE BOTTLE OF  
LAUREL-WATER.

On the 8th of April, 1759, Masulipatam, the capital of Golconda, was taken by storm from the French garrison. Foremost among the English assailants was a young subaltern of the Thirty-ninth Regiment, named Donnellan. This officer, eager for booty, undertook, for eight hundred rupees, to sort from the common loot some chests of treasure and rich bales claimed by certain black and Armenian merchants of the town. For taking this bribe Donnellan was tried by court-martial, and deprived of his commission. Unable to get any redress from Lord Clive, Donnellan returned to England to write an angry pamphlet against his colonel. In some way or other obtaining his half-pay, Donnellan now became a man of pleasure, a gambler, and a fortune hunter, ready to make money by any decorous imposture.

The new Pantheon (intended for a sort of winter Ranelagh), opened in 1772, was built by Mr. Wyatt, and cost some fifty thousand pounds. Horace Walpole, in one of his studied, agreeable letters, praises it as a chef-d'œuvre of architecture, "Imagine," says the clever Fribble, "Baalbec in all its glory." A very splendid sham paradise, no doubt, a paradise fit for Adams like Captain Donnellan, and Eves like the fashionable ladies of his day. Somehow or other the adventurer found means to buy two shares in this undertaking, and to be appointed master of the ceremonies. There he was in all his glory; smooth, graceful, stealthy as a snake, he charmed the Flutters and Teazles of the day, and



reigned butterfly king of that glittering sham world.

In due season he went to Bath to look for an heiress. In June, 1777, fortune sent him one. The inn at which he stayed was so full that there was not another bed. Two Warwickshire ladies, the Dowager Lady Boughton and her fair daughter, arrived, and were in despair. How could they sleep on chairs in a coffee-room? At that moment the door opened, and in glided Donnellan, young, handsome, soft of speech. He insisted on surrendering his bedroom to the two ladies. They accepted the offer with gratitude, and asked their benefactor to breakfast the next morning. He came, he saw, he conquered. Who could resist such a man? Shortly after, to the rage of the family, he eloped with Miss Boughton, and married her triumphantly. As the handsome adventurer, however, generously agreed to abandon all share in his wife's fortune, the family in time grew reconciled.

The handsome and agreeable captain came from Bath with his wife to reside at Lawford Hall, in June, 1778. In the same year, Lady Boughton went to fetch her son, Sir Theodosius, from Eton, where he had wallowed deeply in vice, to live with her quietly down in the Warwickshire house. He attained his twentieth year, August the 3rd, 1780. Wilful and untoward, the sickly young squire soon began to quarrel with his new brother-in-law, whose checks, réproaches, and cautions he took, as might have been expected, in very bad part. From several quarrels and embryo duels in Bath, in 1778, and also at the Assembly Rooms at the Bear Inn, Rugby, in September, 1779, the captain extricated him. Donnellan also saved the lad's life (or at least he claimed to have done so) on one occasion when his foot slipped, as he climbed to the top of Newbold Church to try and turn the weathercock. The captain had also (as he afterwards asserted) entreated the rash stripling never to bathe in the Lawford Hall pond without bundles of bulrushes or bladders. In fact, he had been so considerate and watchful, that Sir Theodosius hated him, and thwarted and snubbed him on every possible occasion.

Several times before August, 1780, the captain had spoken forebodingly of the young squire's health. One day he said in a mysterious way to Lady Boughton:

"Don't talk about leaving Lawford Hall; *something or other may happen*. The is in a very bad state of health. You cannot tell what may arise before that time."

Donnellan had also warned Lady Boughton not to drink out of the same cup

with her son (as he was being salivated), nor to touch the bread he cut, as there might be arsenic on his fingers, since he was fond of poisoning fish to kill the rats. Always considerate, always decorous, the captain became the self-elected guardian angel of Lawford Hall. On Saturday, the 26th of August, this amiable man had a conversation with the Reverend Mr. Newsum, rector of Newbold, who had just returned from a tour. He spoke of the alarming state of Sir The.'s health, and of the way he quacked himself with mercury, from prescriptions in some medical book his mother had foolishly given him. The illness seemed coming to a crisis, and "his intellects at intervals were so much affected, that nobody knew what it was to live with him."

"If that is the case," said the sympathising rector, gravely, "I should say his life is not worth two years' purchase."

"Not one," was the curt reply of the guardian angel.

The Tuesday following Lady Boughton's servant boy, Samuel Frost, was sent over to Rugby for some medicine, and Mr. Powell, the surgeon, delivered the bottle, neatly wrapped up and sealed in the usual trim medical manner, to the servant with his own hand. It was a harmless, commonplace, two-ounce draught of rhubarb, jalap, spirits of lavender, nutmeg water, and syrup, warm, soothing, smelling of spice, if anything at all, slightly purgative, and chiefly useful as a vehicle for charging eighteen-pence. The careless lad took the bottle, touched his hat, and rode back gaily to Lawford Hall. About half-past five the lad delivered the bottle to Sir Theodosius, whom he met on the staircase, and about six o'clock the young baronet went out fishing with Samuel Frost, and Lady Boughton and Mrs. Donnellan took an hour's walk in the garden. It was autumn, and there was fruit to gather, and past the great laurel shrubberies, glittering in the sunset, the two ladies walked, chatting about the grape bunches on this vine, and the freckled greengages yellowing upon that tree. About seven o'clock the gallant captain, debonair as usual, came out of the front door, rubbing his little white hands, and joined his wife and mother-in-law. He said:

"I have been down to see them fishing, and tried to persuade Sir The. to come in, lest he should take cold, but I couldn't." The wilful boy was always imprudent; there were the usual regrets, as it was getting late, and the dew was heavy, but nothing

else was said. The captain drank a cup of milk, and retired early. A little after nine Sir The. came in, very well, but tired; ate a little supper, and went to bed. As his mother was going up-stairs her son called her to his room, and asked permission to send her boy, Sam Frost, out the next morning with the net, for some fish, as Mr. Fonnereau, a Northamptonshire friend of his, was expected in the evening. That night the Boughton family (all but one) slept peacefully.

The next morning about six Sam Frost knocked at his young master's door, and, going in, asked him for some straps to buckle on the fishing-net; the lad, leaping out of bed, brisk and lively, went into the next room to get them. About seven Lady Boughton, as her son had requested her the night before, came in, as she went down-stairs, to give him his rhubarb draught. He appeared well, very well, and, on her inquiring where the bottle was, told her that it stood there upon the shelf. He then asked for a bit of cheese to take the taste out of his mouth, and desired her to read the label, to make sure it was the right bottle. She read: "The purging draught for Sir Theodosius Boughton." She then poured out the turbid, reddish-brown, aromatic liquid, forgetting to first shake it up. The lad at once called out, with all the imperiousness of an invalid, and all the selfish despotism of a spoiled child, "Pour it back again, and shake the bottle." With the slavish affection of a mother, Lady Boughton did so, and in doing so spilt a part upon the table. As Sir The. ruefully drank the thick brown potion, he stopped to say, "It smells and tastes very nauseous."

"I think it smells very strong, like bitter almonds," was Lady Boughton's reply.

He then bit some cheese, rinsed his mouth, and laid down. A minute and a half after he had taken the medicine the poor boy began to struggle, and there was a gurgling in his throat, as if he were unable to keep the nauseous medicine down. These symptoms lasted about ten minutes. Then he grew more composed, and seemed inclined to sleep. Quietly his mother glided from the room. Returning to steal a look at him five minutes afterwards, to her infinite horror she found him with his eyes fixed, his teeth clenched in mortal agony, and froth oozing fast from each corner of his mouth. He was evidently dying. Rushing down-stairs, she ran to the stable where William Frost, the coachman, was waiting

with the horses ready for her morning ride with the captain to the Wells.

"William, William!" she called.

"My lady!" was the answer.

"You must go to Mr. Powell, and fetch him as fast as possible. My son is dangerously ill!"

"There is only your horse in the stable, my lady," said William.

"That will not go fast enough. You must get the mare."

But Captain Donnellan had the mare, and had ridden off to the Wells.

"Go and meet him and take the mare!" was the frantic order.

But just then the captain appeared inside the gate, and the coachman told him he had to take the mare and ride off to Rugby for Mr. Powell. His answer the coachman did not in his excitement mark, but leaped on the mare and dashed off. In less than five minutes from the seizure, the captain was up in Sir The.'s room, where two of the female servants and the mother were standing, petrified with horror, by the dying boy, whose lips a maid was wiping. Donnellan asked coolly what she wanted; at that moment the boy was dying fast.

"I wanted," said Lady Boughton, "to tell you what a terrible thing has happened; what an unaccountable thing in a doctor to send such a medicine, for if a dog had taken it it would have killed him. I don't think my son will live."

The captain asked in what way Sir The. had been taken. Lady Boughton told him. His first question naturally was:

"Where is the physic bottle?"

She pointed to the two bottles. The fatal one recently emptied, and the one emptied on the Saturday. Donnellan took up the last bottle, and being told that was it, instantly poured into it some water out of the water-bottle, shook it carefully, did not taste it, but emptied the contents into a wash-hand basin full of dirty water.

Lady Boughton, struck by this odd proceeding, cried out:

"You ought not to do that. What are you at? You should not meddle with the bottles."

In spite of this the captain at once snatched up the other bottle—the draught bottle of Saturday—poured in water, shook it, then put his finger to taste the liquid, and said it was nauseous.

She again said, with some slight distrust and alarm, "What are you about? You ought not to meddle with the bottles."

He replied, "I did it to taste it."

But he never proposed to taste the con-

tents of the fatal bottle, and that fact struck root in the mother's mind. Another thing, that escaped her observation at the time, soon after still more excited her suspicions. The captain desired Sarah Blundell, one of the housemaids, to remove the basin, the dirty things, and the medicine bottles. Now all this was very decorous and gentleman-like, but was perhaps more befitting an orderly business-like undertaker than a brother-in-law of the poor boy who lay yet scarce cold in the very room where he (the captain) then stood. And yet so anxious was the captain for the neatness of the room that the coroner's jury would soon have to visit, that he actually snatched the medicine bottles together and thrust them himself into the housemaid's shaking hand. But Lady Boughton's vigilance was aroused. She turned, angrily took the bottles out of the girl's hand, and bade her set them down, and let them alone. Donnellan, still anxious for the proprieties, then desired that the place might be cleaned, and the clothes thrown into the inner room. This diverted Lady Boughton's attention, and as she unlocked the door of the inner room, and while her back was turned for the moment, as she was afterwards told, the captain again thrust the bottles into Sarah Blundell's hand, and bade her take them down-stairs, chiding her for not doing what he had at first told her. As the linen was being thrown into the inner room, the captain said to the maid:

"Here, take his stockings. They have been wet, he has caught cold be sure, and that might occasion his death."

Lady Boughton said nothing, but presently felt and examined the stockings. They were neither wet, nor had they been wet. That, too, was singular.

The captain presently went into the garden, and searching out Francis Amos, the gardener, said to him:

"Gardener, you must go and take a couple of pigeons directly" (to kill and put to the feet of the dying boy).

The gardener replied there were none fit to eat.

Donnellan said: "It will make no odds if they are not, for they are for Sir The.; we must have them ready against the doctor comes. Poor fellow (Sir The.), he lies in a sad agony now with his disease—it will be the death of him."

The remedy was, however, a little too late. As the gardener entered the house with the pigeons, Lady Boughton and Mrs. Donnellan, wringing their hands, met him at the door, and cried:

"It is too late now—he is dead!"

He was then sent for two women from the village to lay out the corpse.

The captain remained cool and ever attentive to the proprieties. That class of man is not ruffled by mere vulgar events like death. An hour or two after that scene of agony up-stairs, he was seated with the two weeping women in the parlour. All at once he broke out angrily and strangely to his wife:

"Your mother," he said, "has been pleased to take notice of my washing the bottle out, and I don't know what I should have done if I had not thought of saying I put the water into it to taste it with my finger."

This revived in Lady Boughton the horrible thought of the morning. She said nothing, but turned away from him to the window. He repeated what he had said to his astonished wife. Lady Boughton still stood there, dark against the light, and made no reply. Then he desired his wife to ring the bell and call up a servant. A servant came, and he ordered Will, the coachman, to be sent for. Will came. Donnellan then said:

"Will, don't you remember that I set out of those iron gates this morning about seven o'clock? You remember that, don't you?"

The coachman said, "Yes, sir."

"And that was the first time of my going out. I have never been on the other side of the house this morning. You remember that I set out there at seven o'clock this morning, and asked for a horse to go to the Wells?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you are my evidence?"

"Yes, sir."

That same evening the captain went into the garden to Amos, who used to gather roses and lavender for him to distil, and said to him in the genial way of a probable legatee, and with all the exultation of a future baronet working in him:

"Now, gardener, you shall live at your ease, and work at your ease; it shall not be as it was in Sir The.'s day. I wanted before to be master, but I have got master now, and shall be master."

A few days after, the captain brought Amos a still to clean. It was full of lime, and the lime was wet. The lime-water, he said, had been used to kill fleas, not a common remedy for such intruders; but then the captain was a chemist, and a clever man, and knew what was what better than your Warwickshire gardeners.

And now it was that a rumour began to flit about the house as a bat flutters half visible in the dark. It passed from the harness-room to the still-room, from the servants' hall to the housekeeper's room, from the gardener's shed to the butler's pantry. These dim fears and suspicions, condensed into words, amounted to this, that Sir The. had in some way or other, either by carelessness or intention, been poisoned. Sarah Blundell described how anxious Captain Donnellan had been to remove the medicine bottles from the dead lad's room. Catherine Amos, the cook, then remembered and told the open-mouthed, pale servants gathered round the fire, how a quarter of an hour after Sir The. was seized, just as she had left the dying lad, the captain had met her in the passage and said, "Sir Theodosius was out very late last night a-fishing, and it was very silly of him, such physic as he had been taking." Then Sarah Blundell would mention how her lady had observed that Sir The.'s stockings were not wet, though the captain, who had been with him, had regretted his being out so late in the wet grass. "The captain with him?" said Sam Frost, Lady Boughton's boy, at one of these parliaments in the kitchen; "not he. I and Sir The. were alone the whole time." That was odd, too, and some shook their heads. Moreover, said Sam, "Sir The. was never off his horse the whole time, so how could his feet get wet, mark you." It would not be forgotten either by the servants how the captain had instantly rinsed the bottles, and the gardener would be sure to tell how Mr. Donnellan came somewhat late for the two pigeons, and in the evening how he had exulted at becoming lord of Lawford Hall.

An hour after Sir The.'s death, Mr. Powell, the Rugby surgeon, arrived, and went gravely and with long, solemn steps up-stairs to the room where the corpse lay. He took up the cold waxen hand, and putting it instantly down, said, "He is dead." He then turned to the captain, who with decorous gravity stood watchful at his elbow, and asked how the boy had died.

Donnellan replied, "In convulsions;" he had been out the night before and caught cold. Two bottles were shown Mr. Powell, but no allusion was made to them. Lady Boughton merely told him that soon after the lad took the medicine sent, he had been seized with convulsions.

The same morning that Sir The. died, the captain, ever decorous and business-like, wrote a very calm communication of

the death to Sir William Wheeler, Sir The.'s guardian, who lived ten miles off. It ran thus, and the captain had evidently braced himself to be philosophic and cool under great sorrow:

Lawford Hall, August 31st, 1780.

DEAR SIR,—I am sorry to be the communicator of Sir Theodosius's death to you, which happened this morning; he has been for some time past under the care of Mr. Powell, of Rugby, for the complaint which he had at Eton. Lady Boughton and my wife are inconsolable; they join me in best respects to Lady Wheeler and yourself.

I am, dear sir, with the greatest esteem,  
Your most obedient servant,

JOHN DONNELLAN.

To Sir William Wheeler, Bart.

On Sunday the body of Sir The. was quietly soldered up in a leaden coffin, and the funeral was fixed for the next day. The men in the black cloaks, and the tenants swathed in crape, were already assembled, when Mr. Powell rode over with a very important communication from Sir William Wheeler, and Mr. Powell observed that the captain's hands trembled as he read it, decorous as he ever was.

The calm but serious letter began:

Leamington, September 4th, 1780.

DEAR SIR,—Since I wrote to you last, I have been applied to, as the guardian of the late Sir Theodosius Boughton, to inquire into the cause of his sudden death; report says that he was better the morning of his death, and before he took the physic, than he had been for many weeks, and that he was taken ill in less than half an hour, and died two hours after he had swallowed the physic; and it will be a great satisfaction to Mr. Powell to have his body opened, and I am sure it must be to you, Lady Boughton, and Mrs. Donnellan, when I assure you that it is reported all over the county that he was killed either by medicine or poison. The county will never be convinced to the contrary unless the body is opened, and I beg of you to lay this matter before Lady Boughton in as tender a manner as possible, and to point out to her the real necessity of complying with my request, and to say that it is expected by the county, &c.

The captain at once wrote in the most cordial manner to Sir William, saying: "We most cheerfully wish to have the body opened for the general satisfaction,



and the sooner it is done the better. Come yourself." He also wrote off to Doctor Rattray and Mr. Wilmer, of Coventry, to come that very evening if possible.

It was dark when the two doctors arrived at Lawford Hall on their dismal errand. Captain Donnellan, in his grandest manner, received them in the hall with a candle in his hand; he lighted them into the parlour, and they had refreshment while the coffin was being unsoldered. As they came into the hall, Mr. Powell stood at a table reading a letter which had been lying there, and which he had opened by mistake. Captain Donnellan turned the letter up and read the direction. It was a second letter from Sir William Wheeler, suggesting that no one but the faculty should be present at the examination, "which was not to satisfy his curiosity, but to prevent the world from blaming any of us that had anything to do with poor Sir Theodosius." The letter was very polite, the captain said, and the first letter he had received was much the same. Here he was hardly candid, as the first letter had expressed strong suspicion of poison. He fumbled in his deep-flapped waistcoat-pocket for the first letter, but only pulled out a cover, which Mr. Powell, with only one quick glance, thought he saw was in Sir William's handwriting. At the bottom of the stairs the captain said, "Gentlemen, you will excuse me;" so the three doctors and an assistant went up alone to the room where the corpse lay. It was too late to examine the body, and they came down and told Donnellan so, asking especially for what purpose it was to be opened. Here, again, the polished man of the world was not frank, for he replied, merely for the satisfaction of the family. That being the only motive, they declined to perform an examination now useless, and recommended the immediate burial. The four gentlemen then stayed supper, and refusing to remain all night, though the captain, always polite, pressed it strongly, they left, Donnellan giving them six guineas apiece, and the assistant two. All was most pleasantly arranged.

The next morning the funeral was again organised; and once more the tenants in black gathered round the churchyard. Early that day Captain Donnellan wrote a brief and ambiguous letter to Sir William, saying that the doctors had attended to his wish, and satisfied them all at Lawford. The funeral was to be at three o'clock that day, unless Sir William wrote to the contrary. But before that hour an officious surgeon of

Rugby, named Bucknill, came and offered to open the body. The captain seemed angry, and said it would not be fair to the eminent gentlemen who had declined to make the examination. Nevertheless, if Sir William wished it, he might do so on showing his order. The next day a letter came from Sir William, wondering he had not seen Doctor Rattray or Mr. Wilmer, and requesting that Mr. Bucknill and Mr. Snow, of Southam, might open the body. At three o'clock that day Mr. Bucknill came, but, before Mr. Snow arrived, was called away by a patient. On his return, in an hour, Mr. Snow had refused to open the body, the funeral was proceeding, and Mr. Snow had left. Mr. Bucknill, vexed and suspicious, rode off in an angry canter, and that night at seven the young baronet was buried in the family vault at Newbold.

But even now the poor lad was not to rest in peace. The Reverend Mr. Newsom, and Lord Denbigh, a neighbour, roused Sir William to action by repeating fresh rumours. On the Saturday, three days after the funeral, an inquest was held at Newbold, and Mr. Bucknill, with Doctor Rattray and Wilmer, examined the body. It was too late for useful examination, but Doctor Rattray observed at the time a biting acrid taste on his tongue, such as he had felt in subsequent experiments with laurel-water. The inquest was then adjourned. On the 14th, the day the inquest was resumed, the captain wrote a letter to the coroner, in his bland way, to "give him any information he could collect."

"During the time," he said, in his rather confused way, "Sir Theodosius was here, great part of it was spent in procuring things to kill rats, with which this house swarms remarkably; he used to have arsenic by the pound-weight at a time, and laid the same in and about the house in various places, and in many forms. We often expostulated with him about the extreme careless manner in which he acted. His answer to us was, that the men-servants knew where he had laid the arsenic, and it was no business to us. At table we have not knowingly eaten anything for many months past which we perceived him to touch." The captain also mentioned that Sir The. was in the habit of making up horse medicines and goulard-water, and when he was fishing, attending his rabbits, or at carpenter's work, he would split fish, and lay arsenic in them, for the rats, herons, and otters, and also that he used *coccus indicus* for stupefying fish.

In spite of this letter the jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against the decorous captain, who, to his extreme surprise, and with all the fortitude of innocence, was at once removed to Rugby, from there to Coventry, and from thence to Warwick, where he was heavily chained, and kept in the closest confinement.

The polished criminal, still astonished at his arrest, was tried at the Warwick Assizes, March 30th, 1781, before Mr. Justice Buller. All the doctors examined, except the celebrated John Hunter, were of opinion that Sir Theodosius had been poisoned by laurel-water, mixed with the last bottle of Mr. Powell's medicine. A case was quoted where a young girl had drank only two spoonfuls of laurel-water, half a minute after which she was convulsed, foamed at the mouth, and shortly after died. Animals that took the same poison, it was proved, were instantly convulsed and paralysed. Two bottles were produced in court, one of plain rhubarb and lavender, such as Mr. Powell had prescribed, the other mixed with laurel-water, and the bitter almond smell Lady Boughton recognised as the odour she had noticed on the fatal August morning. John Hunter, called for the defence, deposed that he had, in thirty-three years' practice, dissected some thousands of bodies, and had poisoned some thousands of animals. With no proof that the bottle contained poison, he should consider the symptoms mentioned at the death of Sir Theodosius as quite as likely to have been caused by apoplexy or epilepsy. Poisons generally had the same effect on animals as on men, but there were things that instantaneously killed animals yet did not hurt men; for instance, a little brandy would always kill a cat, for through the animal's struggling the spirit got into the lungs, and so produced death.

The prisoner, in his defence, turned and doubled with the cunning of a wounded hare. He was especially anxious to frankly account for every moment of his time on the Tuesday evening and the fatal Wednesday morning. As to the evening, his story varied entirely from Lady Boughton's evidence. According to his own account, at half-past five, when Sam Frost returned with the medicine, he was walking in a field near the house with his child. He then went to the front garden, when presently Lady Boughton came out of the house with a basket in her hand, and called to him to help her gather some fruit. While they were gathering the fruit Sir Theodosius rode by the garden

wall, and told them he was going fishing. Some of the fruit being out of his (Donnellan's) reach, Lady Boughton asked him to go and call Sam Frost to bring a ladder. He went into the house, and called "Sam" several times, but no one answering, he went to the kitchen, and found the three maids, Sarah, the housemaid, Susannah, Mrs. Donnellan's maid, and Catherine, the cook, busy washing. They not knowing where Sam was, he returned to Lady Boughton, having been absent only three minutes. Soon after Sam Frost came with the ladder, and while they were gathering the fruit, Sarah Blundell, the housemaid, came and told Lady Boughton that a Mr. Dand and one Matthews, a carpenter, wanted her, upon which he (Donnellan) and Lady Boughton returned to the house. It was then about six. They talked to Dand and Matthews in the hall for some ten minutes; then the two men left by the door leading into the inner court-yard, and Donnellan returned to the garden. There were large iron gates opening from the garden into the court-yard, and as he reached those gates he observed Dand and Matthews passing along the yard into the stables. Remembering he had something more to say to them, he opened the iron gates, and called them. After some chat Dand left, and Donnellan and the carpenter walked to Hewitt's Mill, near the Hall, to talk over some alterations. From there he went along the river-side to look at some flood-gates. At length, finding the dew heavy and his feet wet, at past nine he returned to the Hall, through the iron gates, into the garden, and from thence through the hall and passage into the parlour, where Lady Boughton was sitting alone. As he passed through the garden, he looked in at the parlour window, and saw his mother-in-law. She was angry at her son's being out so late, as she would be obliged to light candles. Just then Mrs. Donnellan entered, and begged him to take off his wet shoes and stockings. He refused, saying he was tired, and drinking a basin of milk, his usual supper, wished his mother-in-law good night, and went to bed. In five minutes after his wife followed him. The room they slept in was directly over the parlour, and the staircase leading to it adjoined the parlour door. Had he stolen up to Sir The.'s room he must have passed the parlour door, which was open the whole evening, and have gone eighty yards through the house, to the opposite side, where he must have been seen by the servants.

The next morning he rose at six to ride with Lady Boughton (as had been agreed upon the evening before) some miles from Lawford Hall, to inquire about a servant. After waiting in the porch till he was tired, he went below her chamber window, and called her several times. She at last answered him from a window at the stair-head, between her son's room and her own, and said she should not be ready for a quarter of an hour. He then thought he would ride to Newnham Wells, three quarters of a mile off, to drink the waters before she was ready. As for rinsing the bottle, he did it merely to taste the contents better. The bottle was not destroyed, but taken down by Sarah Blundell and put in a place in the kitchen used for storing. When asked for by Mr. Caldecott, the solicitor for the prosecution, he (Donnellan) found, as he believed, the very bottle, and brought it out of the kitchen and placed it in the parlour, on the harpsichord, ready to be produced. As to gaining by the death of Sir Theodosius any part of his two thousand pounds a year, Donnellan declared that he had debarred himself from all control in his wife's fortune, and had been for two years preparing for holy orders, Sir Theodosius having promised him, on coming of age, the living of Great Harborough, as well as that of Newbold-upon-Avon. This would have been a maintenance for life. As to the still, he had used it only for lavender and roses. It was true he often gathered laurel leaves, but he used them only for making an aromatic bath for the gout. He had taken the receipt from a book called the Tribe of Flora, and he had recommended the laurel-water bath to Lady Boughton.

But after all these evasions, how tremendous was the evidence that fell on the gentle spoken, soft-handed man! Let us briefly review it. It was proved that he had begged Sir Theodosius not to keep his medicines in the locked-up inner room, but in the outer room, where he would not forget them, as the boy had once nearly taken poison by mistake. It was shown that he knew the medicine had been sent for. He told a deliberate lie about being out fishing with Sir Theodosius, and about the lad's feet being wet. The next day, although informed by the coachman that Sir Theodosius is dangerously ill, he goes to Lady Boughton and asks what is the matter. He again talks of the wet feet, and attributes the illness to the cold. His first aim is to wash out the fatal bottle, the contents of which he never tastes, and he is nervously anxious,

in spite of Lady Boughton, to send away and mix the medicine bottles.

It was shown, moreover, that at the instant, he pulled Lady Boughton's sleeve when she began to mention that he had rinsed the bottles. Then, although the lad is dying fast, Donnellan goes and orders pigeons for his feet two hours later. The same night he boasts to the gardener that he is now lord of Lawford Hall, as he had long wished to be. Next, about the still, it is shown he kept a still in a locked-up room, and upon Sir Theodosius's death had filled it with lime, and given it to the gardener to clean, and after that to the cook to dry in the oven. Then again how he shuffles about the examination of the body, and conceals the letter of Sir William Wheeler, announcing grave suspicions of poison having been used. How easily he yields to the doctors' wishes to escape the painful task, and how dexterously, in the absence of the energetic and scrutinising Bucknill, he talks over Mr. Snow, and hurriedly buries the body. How artfully, too, he passes from the notion of death from cold to the suspicion of poisoning by a mistaken medicine. It is true the laurel-water is not found in the body, but the odour of the medicine and the symptoms of death indicate with certainty the special poison given. Can we doubt that this white-handed, soft-footed scoundrel, between six and seven o'clock that bright, warm August evening, when Sir Theodosius rode away gaily to the river, when the servants were busy washing, and most of the men-servants away fishing, stole into the silent bedroom, poured away part of the rhubarb, and filled up the bottle with the fatal laurel-water, long ago brewed behind locked doors for that purpose? Then with one glance round (perhaps starting at his own pale face, reflected in the mute looking-glass) he would glide down, and demurely rubbing his little innocent hands, pass decorously into the garden between the laurels, to smile and chat, and pay compliments to the mother-in-law he secretly detested. Another day, if all went well, that still might be fed with more laurel leaves, and another painful, sudden death might follow.

Donnellan's final remarks to the jury were plausible as ever. He alluded regretfully to the many false, malevolent, and cruel reports circulated since his confinement, tending to prejudice the minds of the people in an opinion injurious to his honour, and dangerous to his life; but he still (thank God!) had confidence that nothing could mislead their justice and humanity,

in depending, as he did, entirely on the conscience of his judge, and the unprejudiced impartiality of his jury, and so on. The judge, however, we hardly regret to state, summed up with death in every word, and the jury, after nine minutes' consultation, found him guilty. In Warwick Jail Donnellan behaved, as might have been expected, smoothly, wickedly, and grasping like a lying coward at any means of escape. He wrote to his wife to remove at once from a roof where she was likely to undergo the fate of those who had gone already by sudden means. He accused Lady Boughton of having poisoned her husband, who had died suddenly, and insisted that she had poisoned her son. His last crime was to sign and depose to the entire truth of a defence of himself (partly printed from the brief), and published by his solicitors, Messrs. Inge and Webb, after he was hung. It was signed Sunday, April the 1st, 1781, and begins: "This case has been read over to me this day, being the last day of my life, and it contains nothing but real facts as far as my knowledge goes; and I solemnly request, and firmly desire, that it may be published, as a firm vindication of my honour and character to the world." Two keepers slept in the condemned cell, and they, seeing the captain did not plan suicide, dozed. When he thought them asleep, the murderer threw himself upon his knees, and prayed fervently for a considerable time. Who may say he did not repent? But he made no confession. He was hung the next day, and his body given to the surgeons.

Lawford Hall, the scene of this murder, was sold in 1790 to the Caldecote family, who pulled it down as a place with a curse upon it; part of the stables still remains built into a farm-house.

### GEOFFREY LUTTRELL'S NARRATIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN THAT STATE OF LIFE," &c.

#### IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

A FEW weeks since we followed to his last resting-place in Kensal Green our old friend Geoffrey Luttrell. There were but four of us: but four persons in the world, I believe, who knew his real worth, and heartily felt the dear old fellow's loss. Of these, three were brother artists, the fourth was the landlady of the lodging between Notting-hill and Shepherd's Bush, which Luttrell had inhabited for upwards of thirty years. It had stood on the edge of green fields when he went to live there; it is now

almost choked up with pert little streets, and very small pretentious villas. But he would not abandon it, perhaps for old habit's sake, perhaps for the yet worthier sake of Mrs. Brace. She was a good, warm-hearted woman and an observant. She had waited on him all these years, and knew more of the recluse's ways than any of us. His shyness with his fellow-men, and his passionate love of nature—a love which bore him fruits in the tender, faithful work, which, with the faltering hand of upwards of threescore years, he yet produced—his pure-mindedness, his unfailing charity and sympathy with all suffering, these features in our friend's character were well known to us, who saw him as often as the busy wheel of London life would allow. But who could tell the daily round of his silent, solitary hours like Mrs. Brace? In a long talk we had together, that dreary November afternoon in the sad little parlour, where we all sat after I had read our friend's brief will, the good woman said:

"It's my belief, sir, as he'd had some heavy sorrow in his early life. Other people's troubles seemed to come so nat'ral to him. When my Betty went away, Lord! how good he was to me! He was just like a child, you see; his books and his watering-colours, them was all his life. Everythink was a pictur' to him—the little childer in the gutters, the sunset over the chimneys yonder, that layloc tree when it was a-comin' into bloom, it was all a pictur' to him. He'd no visitors but you three gents: it was drawrin' or readin' from morning to night. Bless you, there's enough of the dear man's sketches to paper the house from top to bottom. Talk of eatin'!" (no one had talked of eating, I am sure) "it was as much as I could do sometimes to get him to take a snack of anythink. If I didn't look sharp, he'd be a-givin' it to one of them orgin-grinders, for it was nothin' but givin', givin', with some excuse or other, to every blessed soul as come to the house. He'd a' give the coat off his back if I hadn't stopped him. Ah, I shall never see his like again—never!"

The deceased left no relations. What little money he had, had been made by himself; and this he desired might be divided among us four. The only legacies were fifty pounds to the Foundling Hospital; certain specified sketches to G. and W. (the friends now present with me), and the bequest of the remainder, together with all books and papers; to myself, as residuary legatee. The books, which were not numerous, comprised most of the old



poets; some of them in scarce editions, picked up, I doubt not, at bookstalls in the course of nearly forty years' wanderings through London streets, a fine black-letter copy of Chaucer, another of the *Morte d'Arthur*, and a great collection of ancient ballads. The sketches were all of the most ordinary scenes, bits of wind-blown common, with a rusty donkey, and a drove of orange-billed geese, fluttering along open-mouthed: ends of summer evening in some green lane near Hampstead, with a golden twilight melting into purple vapour, through which the dim shadow of two lovers was just discernible. No great Alpine glories, or marvels of southern glow; simple English nature, but touched by a poet's hand, albeit that hand lacked perhaps the boldness of positive genius. Tenderness and refinement were its characteristics; it touched, too tremulously it may be, these common things, but it elevated them at once, nevertheless, into the region of the uncommon. As to the papers, besides a bundle of letters from persons long since dead, which my old friend had carefully docketed, "To be burned when I am no more," the only packet of any bulk was sealed and addressed to me. Within was a manuscript of some length, the portrait of a lady, and a slip of note-paper, on which were these lines:

August 4th, 1869.

MY FRIEND,—If it shall seem good to you to make known the facts herein told, in whatsoever form you please, do so. The actors in this drama have long since played out their parts. I, who was little more than chorus, am the last to quit the scene. The reading of this sad play, then, can wound no soul alive: since all whom it concerns are beyond the reach of such hurts. But, it may be, some poor heart, in the sore strait of like temptation, may herein find warning or comfort. Therefore, not without some pain, my friend, have I writ it all down; and to you do I confide these passages of my youth: to give, or to withhold, as you deem wise, when I am gone.

Your friend, G. L.

P.S.—No eye but mine has seen this portrait for more than forty years. Why I have valued it more than anything I possess (poor daub as it is!) you will understand on reading these pages. Keep it, or burn it, my friend. Its sweet eyes can grieve no one any more on earth now.

The portrait was that of a dark young

woman in a mediæval dress, and resembled in its general character a head by Masaccio. Much of positive beauty in the brow and finely cut nostril, and yet more of an elevated, thoughtful power in the deep-set eyes, overruling the passionate persuasion of the mouth. Whatever might be the history of the person to whom it belonged, the head could not fail to interest any one for whom a strong individual human type has any attraction. I have had that little drawing framed, and it will henceforward hang in my bedroom.

And now, without further preamble, I give Geoffrey Luttrell's narrative, having come to the conclusion that no disasters can arise from the publication thereof.

#### CHAPTER II.

I WAS a Westminster boy, my father living in the precincts, so that I boarded at home, and my schooling cost him little. He was a poor man, and worked hard to give me that best of privileges—a good education. I was here from the age of seven until seventeen, and all the learning I ever had was then acquired. Four years before I left Westminster, a sturdy little lad named Harry Walbrooke arrived, and became my fag. I never was a bully, and from a fag he grew to be my friend. Why, it would be hard to say. What he can have found to attract him in me I cannot tell. No two boys could be more dissimilar, but he attached himself to me, and from that time forward our friendship never suffered a decline. He was all for athletics—a first-rate runner and jumper, and, though three years my junior, could knock me down like a nine-pin. He had good abilities, but he was incorrigibly idle. On the other hand, I, who never had brilliant parts, worked steadily, and to this plodding capacity I attribute my having carried off so many prizes. But then I had not Harry's temptations. I was weakly, and averse to games. The only amusement I pursued with ardour was drawing. While Harry was at foot-ball I was scrawling likenesses on the backs of my old copy-books; and proud enough was I if they were recognised. Our social positions were as wide apart as our characters and inclinations. The Walbrookes are a very old Lincolnshire family; and Harry's uncle, Mr. Walbrooke of the Grange, was possessed of very large estates. He had been married twenty years, and was childless. Harry's father, a dissipated younger brother of Mr. Walbrooke's, had died abroad utterly penniless, leaving two children, Harry and Lena;

and these children Mr. Walbrooke had, apparently, adopted. The Grange had been their home ever since their father's death; and though Mr. Walbrooke had other nephews and nieces, there seemed to be no doubt that he meant to make Harry his heir. He was fond and proud of the lad; proud of his riding so well to hounds; proud of the bag he brought home to his own gun when he went out rabbit shooting; and very proud of his manly address and handsome face. Nothing was too good for Master Harry; he brought back to school more pocket-money, and received more hampers every "half," than any other boy at Westminster. But no one ever grudged him these; for a more generous fellow never lived. He was for sharing everything with those he liked. As to me, knowing I had nothing to give in return, I used to feel ashamed to take all the good things he thrust upon me. The utmost I could do was to help him in his Latin verses, and to tender such wholesome counsel at times as saved him, I believe, from more than one flogging.

I have said the contrast between our social positions was great; but it is not my intention to say more about myself than is absolutely necessary. In undertaking to write this narrative I had other objects in view than to record my own career. This much must be told, however: my father was very poor, I was his only child, and his hope was to have seen me in one of the learned professions. But my taste for art was so pronounced, that, with his usual kindness, he allowed me to follow the bent of my inclinations. I became a student of the Royal Academy, on leaving Westminster; my friendship with Harry Walbrooke, my friendship with Harry Walbrooke, was not snapped asunder, as such intimacies generally are in like cases. On Saturday afternoons I often paid him a visit; and once or twice my father obtained leave to take him to the pit of Drury Lane, where he witnessed Miss O'Neill's acting in *Venice Preserved*, as I well remember. Harry wept plentifully, while I appeared to be unmoved. My father could not understand what seemed to him a contradiction in our characters. But it was not so. Harry's feelings were always demonstrative and uncontrolled; mine, by a tacit understanding with myself, had been used to restraint from a very early age.

The year after I left Westminster, I went for the first time, on Mr. Walbrooke's invitation, to stay at the Grange. It was

a fine stately place; and the manner of life there realised all that I had pictured of the grand old English style. There was hospitality without stint and without ostentation; a sense of abundance without extravagance, which, I have since observed, is not as common in the dwellings of the rich as one might expect. This was Mr. Walbrooke's chief virtue. He had no vices; but his excellence, and the world considered him excellent, was of a negative kind. He went to church; he was a Tory; he never quarrelled openly with any of his neighbours, nor exercised any harsh tyranny at home. But then everybody gave way to him, and had given way all his life. He was the most obstinate man I ever knew. When he took up an idea—and one often failed to see what possible object he proposed to himself—he would sacrifice everything to carrying it out. He never lost his temper, but he had a persistent way which bore down all opposition. Mrs. Walbrooke was her husband's chief slave. There is little further to be said of her. In person she resembled one of Sir Thomas Lawrence's most affected portraits, but like them she represented a gentlewoman. She played on the harp indifferently, and worked in floss silks. She sat at the head of her table gracefully; and had a very pleasant cordial manner, which attracted, until one came to perceive that it meant nothing. She had taken to Harry and Lena, as if they had been her own children, and the girl was fond of her aunt. But neither Mr. nor Mrs. Walbrooke had qualities which obtain a lasting influence over children. Harry's way and his uncle's had not hitherto clashed. In all ordinary matters, the boy had a great ascendancy over his uncle, but the time would come when that obedience which is begotten of admiration and respect for character would not be forthcoming: and I foresaw that the strain upon affection and gratitude would be more than it could stand. For Harry knew his uncle's foibles, and talked of them more openly than I liked, though he loved him, and was fully sensible that all he had he owed to Mr. Walbrooke.

Shortly before my first visit to the Grange a new inmate had come there. She was but a very young girl, yet she had a history. It was this. A curate named Fleming, living near London, had found at his gate one September evening, sixteen years before this, a bundle, which, upon examination, proved to contain a female infant, some few weeks old. Upon her

was pinned a paper, with the name "Assunta," written in what was apparently a foreign hand. The child's eyes and complexion seemed to indicate that she came of Italian parents; but no clue to them could be obtained. The presumption was (taking the infant's age into consideration) that she had been born on the Festival of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, in honour of which she had been named; and that, driven by some dire necessity, the parents now sought a home for their poor baby at the door of a benevolent man, whose character was well known. It may be well to state here, lest the lovers of sensation should expect a romance upon this head, that nothing was ever known of Assunta's parentage. She may have been the offspring of an organ-grinder. But she had that noble inheritance which is not of this earth, which nothing can give, or take away. Mr. Fleming had been married some few years, but had no children at this time. He was a young man of æsthetic tastes, who indulged far more than his means justified in rare editions, old engravings, and the like. He had made an imprudent marriage in every sense of the word, having taken unto himself, at the age of twenty, a girl possessed of nothing but a pretty face. She had grieved and fretted at having no children of her own, and jumped at the idea of adopting this little Italian baby. Her kind husband weakly yielded to her importunity. She told him it was "Christian-like," which it might be, but it was not politic, Christianity and policy not being identical; and the young couple took upon themselves a burden which, as time went on, weighed heavily upon them. In course of years it came to pass that four children were born, and then, what to do with Assunta became a serious question. She was remarkably clever; Mr. Fleming taught her himself, and, being a good modern linguist, as well as a classical scholar, her education was far more thorough than most women's. How Mr. Walbrooke heard of Mr. Fleming, and of Assunta, I forget now; but the idea occurred to him that Lena might learn more with a teacher who was at the same time a companion, than she had done with two governesses of mature experience, who had found the task of instructing her beyond them. It was an experiment, taking such a mere child as Assunta was in years to control a somewhat unruly little lady like Lena; but Miss Fleming came, ostensibly on a visit to the Grange, and once there it became very soon

apparent that her "visit" would be a permanent one. All hearts, more or less, were laid at the feet of the slight, dark-eyed girl, whose voice and whose smile had a subtle charm, which no other voice and smile I have ever known possessed. What was it about her which was so unlike any other woman? I ask myself now. She always reminded me of one of Francia's or Gian Bellini's Madonnas, in her sweet gravity and girlish dignity; but the mystery of those deep eyes was, at moments, lighted up by passionate flashes, which belonged not to that type of divine calm, the "peace which passeth understanding." With her passionate nature, she had a tendency to melancholy, which, reading her character by the light of subsequent events, I have no doubt was entirely beyond her control, and sprang from causes dating from her birth itself. She could be joyous enough at times, however, and her intense power of sympathy made her a delightful companion for Lena, who soon grew as docile as a lamb in her hands.

I had not been two days at the Grange before I saw how it would be. She and Harry were nearly of an age (I believe she was a few months older), how could they do otherwise than fall in love with each other? God knows, I suffered enough after that first visit, for many a long year, on her account; yet I was thankful to have had my eyes open to the truth at once. I never had any delusion, never was buoyed up by false hope. I knew she was beyond my reach, and I was loyal to my friend. He possessed everything in the world to make a girl love him; I possessed nothing. It would have been useless to try and enter into rivalry with him, had I been so minded. Though Assunta was more reserved in her manner with Harry than with me, numberless little indications told me that already the girl thought of him with a deep and particular interest; and being given to observe closely, even at that age, I felt certain that if she really gave her heart, it would be until death.

It was summer time, and while Harry was fishing, I used to wander into a beech wood, at the back of the house, ostensibly to sketch. The stream wound its way through this wood, now brawling over pebbles, with the loud voice of shallowness, now stealing over pools in the quiet strength of depth. Gravelly banks, hollowed out by the action of the stream when swollen, and crowned with feathery grasses, overhung the water, leaving scarce soil enough in places to sustain the roots of

some slanting beech, whose silvery arms stretched far across the stream. It was of such a spot as this that I was making a study which required much care and more skill than I could then master. I returned to my work several days, and was generally alone; but on one occasion, about mid-day, Harry joined me. He was wading slowly up the stream, his trousers tucked above his knees, his bare brown legs gleaming like a Triton's through the silvery water, which he flogged with a pertinacity which had been but ill-repaid, judging by the empty basket slung upon his back. While he stood grumbling at his ill-luck, inveighing against the sun that would shine, and the fish that wouldn't bite, a merry shout, which we both recognised as Lena's, broke from a pathway in the wood hard by. A moment later she came in sight, dragging Miss Fleming along by a scarf she had wound round her waist.

"Oh! here's Harry and Mr. Luttrell," cried the child. "That is capital. I want to get to the other side of the river, to where the foxgloves are, and the bridge is such a long, long way round. You can carry us both over, can't you, Harry? Assunta is not at all heavy."

"I shall be delighted," said the young fisherman, laying his rod on the bank, and slipping off his basket with agility.

"No," said Miss Fleming, quietly, "we can go no further, Lena. We must turn back, now."

"Come, that's very hard," cried Harry. "Sit down, at all events, for a minute, won't you? I've had no luck. I've not caught a thing to-day."

"And so you want to catch us?" laughed his little sister, who was too sharp not to be dangerous company sometimes; "but you won't catch us—you won't—you won't!" she cried, dancing in and out among the thickets, in provocation of pursuit. "We are not to be caught any more than the fish, are we, Assunta?"

"It is time to be going home," said Miss Fleming. "Come, Lena." But the child was by no means disposed to leave us.

"I am thirsty. I want to drink some of that clear cold water, Harry. I wish I was a fish, I'd come up and look at you, and say, 'Don't you wish you may catch me?' and then dart away, and lie in the shadow of that bank there all day long. Oh, Harry! do give me some water in your hands."

"That's just the way with all impudent

little fishes," said her brother, as he stooped and made a cup of his two hands. "They are as cheeky as anything one minute, whisk their tails in one's very face, and the next, they come up and ask to be hooked quite demurely."

But, whether in retaliation for this speech or not, Lena, after a noisy effort to imbibe something from the impromptu goblet, declared it to be a miserable failure—she could not get a drop. Then she stood at the edge of the stream, and tried herself, and the water ran through her fingers, and all down the front of her frock. After which nothing would serve her but that Assunta should make the experiment. The girl's small brown hands hollowed themselves like two close-fitting shells, and reaching down she filled and lifted them to the child's mouth, who clapped her hands with delight, shouting:

"Assunta's done it! Assunta's done it! She didn't spill a drop. And oh! you don't know how good it is! You can't do it, you great clumsy Harry—ask Assunta to give you some."

Then Harry, after sundry efforts, in which I believe he purposely failed, humbly begged Miss Fleming to give him some water in her hands. I think, for one moment, she hesitated; but to decline was to attach too much importance to an act of child's play. With a faint blush she stooped, and once more filled the cup made by her fingers in the stream. As they stood there, she on the strip of shore, her arms lifted towards him, he in the water, a little below her, his fine profile buried in the girl's hands, it was a group ready made for any sculptor. And I seemed to fore-read the history of those two lives in the momentary action. She will always be a little above him; but he may drink, an' he list, the pure water of a noble life at her hands.

She dropped them ere he had quite done, and some of the water was spilt. The blood flushed up to her very brow as she turned away. And I knew that he had kissed her hands.

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**The Accumulated Funds** of the LIFE DEPARTMENT,  
*irrespective of the Paid-up Capital*, amounted, as at 31st  
December 1870, to . . . **£2,075,193:7:7**

**The Annual Revenue** derived from Life Premiums  
and Interest amounted for 1870 to **£360,625:18:9**

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THE INVESTIGATION into the Life Business, for the Five  
Years ending 31st December 1870, exhibited

**A Surplus Divisible Fund of £182,274:5:2,**

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*North British & Mercantile Insurance Company.*

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**Total Reserve of £635,479 : 6 : 2**

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**as a Fund for future Periodical Divisions of Profits.**

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**PROGRESS OF THE BUSINESS.**

During the Septennial Period 1859 to 1865, the annual average of New Business transacted was 971 Policies, assuring £726,266. During the period 1866 to 1870,—being the first Quinquennial Division after the period for the allocation of Profits had been altered from Seven Years to Five Years,—the annual average Business had been 913 New Policies, assuring £826,428. The total New Business for the last Quinquennium was :—

| No. of Policies | Assuring   | Premiums          |
|-----------------|------------|-------------------|
| 4567            | £4,132,141 | £133,279 : 16 : 5 |

## *North British & Mercantile Insurance Company.*

### **Example of Annual Premiums payable during Whole of Life** *for the Assurance of £100, to be paid at Death,*

WITH PARTICIPATION IN THE PROFITS.

| ANNUAL PREMIUMS.<br>BY UNIFORM SCALE. |          |      |          | ANNUAL PREMIUMS.<br>BY HALF-PREMIUM SCALE. |                   |                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------|------|----------|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| Age.                                  | Premium. | Age. | Premium. | Age.                                       | First Five Years. | Remainder of Life. |
| 20                                    | £1 18 2  | 36   | £2 18 6  | 20   | £1 2 0            | £2 1 10            |
| 21                                    | 1 19 1   | 37   | 3 0 2    | 22   | 1 3 2             | 2 4 1              |
| 22                                    | 2 0 1    | 38   | 3 2 0    | 24   | 1 4 6             | 2 6 7              |
| 23                                    | 2 1 2    | 39   | 3 4 1    | 26   | 1 6 0             | 2 9 5              |
| 24                                    | 2 2 3    | 40   | 3 6 1    | 28   | 1 7 6             | 2 12 4             |
| 25                                    | 2 3 5    | 41   | 3 7 11   | 30   | 1 9 1             | 2 15 3             |
| 26                                    | 2 4 8    | 42   | 3 9 11   | 32   | 1 10 8            | 2 18 4             |
| 27                                    | 2 6 0    | 43   | 3 12 0   | 34   | 1 12 6            | 3 1 9              |
| 28                                    | 2 7 4    | 44   | 3 14 4   | 36   | 1 14 7            | 3 5 7              |
| 29                                    | 2 8 7    | 45   | 3 16 7   | 38   | 1 16 10           | 3 10 0             |
| 30                                    | 2 9 10   | 46   | 3 19 1   | 40   | 1 19 4            | 3 14 8             |
| 31                                    | 2 11 1   | 47   | 4 1 11   | 42   | 2 1 10            | 3 19 6             |
| 32                                    | 2 12 5   | 48   | 4 4 10   | 44   | 2 4 7             | 4 4 9              |
| 33                                    | 2 13 10  | 50   | 4 11 11  | 46   | 2 7 9             | 4 10 9             |
| 34                                    | 2 15 5   | 55   | 5 11 2   | 48   | 2 11 6            | 4 17 11            |
| 35                                    | 2 17 0   | 60   | 6 16 2   | 50   | 2 16 2            | 5 6 9              |

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